

Wilson

Post
22 Mar 81

The Americans Who Are Training And Supplying Libyan Terrorists

By Stephen Kurkjian
And Ben Bradlee Jr.

AS A GREEN BERET, he was accustomed to clandestine assignments in exotic places. But this was different.

Before, whether in Southeast Asia or the Dominican Republic, he'd always known that he was working for the United States. But now he was in Libya, an avowed enemy of the United States, working for its terrorist-prone military.

He had been in Tripoli less than a week when he was first taken to see the base of operations for the group he had joined. With another American at the wheel, they drove about 20 miles south of their luxury seaside hotel until the sandy stretches of North African desert gave way to a lush orange grove. The car stopped at the end of the grove in front of the palace of the former king of Libya, who had been ousted in 1969 by Muammar Qaddafi, the Libyan leader.

Behind a set of locked doors in the basement of the servants' quarters was located, in effect, a small American munitions factory, stocked with explosives shipped from the United States. There a group of Americans was busy camouflaging small bombs as lamps, candles, briefcases and ashtrays.

The Green Beret, who less than 10 days earlier had been going through routine Army drills at Fort Bragg, N.C., was now part of an ongoing operation which, from 1976 through at least 1979, is alleged to have provided terrorist training and explosives for the Libyan government.

At its simplest, this story tells how a growing band of mercenaries, many of them Americans, sold their daring and special knowledge to the highest bidder — in this instance, the forces of international terrorism. But some of the Americans involved in the Libyan project — including the Green Beret who was given a leave of absence by his superiors to take part in the operation — are convinced that the U.S. government knew full well what they were doing, and may have let it continue longer than it should have, in hopes of infiltrating the international terrorist movement. Qaddafi, after all, has openly financed such groups as the Palestine Liberation Organization, Italy's Red Brigades, the Irish Republican Army, the Japanese Red Army, Germany's Baader-Meinhoff gang, and others.

Even more troubling to the State Department is what Americans may still be doing in Libya today.

At present, according to State Department intelligence, there are more than a dozen, and perhaps as many as 50, Americans — not necessarily connected to the Americans in the following report — in Libya providing military support to the government.

See LIBYA, Page D5